

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

5/27/20 COVID-19 UPDATE:

Your local health department is here to assist you with questions related to COVID-19 (new coronavirus).

GULF TESTING NUMBERS STATUS

Number of COVID-19 tests so far: 719

Number of negative tests: 718

Number of positive tests: 1 (RECOVERED)

Please note: The demand for the testing and designated laboratory, may cause a slight delay in reporting as reflected on the Florida COVID-19 Dashboard.

For Daily Gulf County COVID-19 Updates straight to your phone: text GULFCOVID to 888777

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276

Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: 850-653-2111

There is also a hotline available at **866-779-6121** or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

PHASE 1: PLAN FOR FLORIDA'S RECOVERY

On May 22, 2020 Gov. DeSantis launched the Expanding Full Phase 1: Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step Plan for Florida's Recovery.

To view the complete order, visit: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2020/EO_20-131.pdf.

A closer look at all phases can be found using this link: <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Taskforce%20Report.pdf>

COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANDED TESTING PLAN

The Department of Health is thankful for the number of individuals who have shown up to be tested during our "May2Day" Testing Project.

The goal behind this initiative is to test 2% of the population each month in order to align with the Governor's reopening phases. Each County Health Department (CHD) will coordinate with community partners to expand local testing offered to meet monthly targets. Test results will be reflected on the [Florida's COVID-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard](#) as they come available.

Testing benchmarks set for each county:

Franklin: 247 per month

Gulf: 325 per month

UPCOMING DRIVE-THRU TESTING IN PORT SAINT JOE

On Wednesday, June 3rd, from 12PM – 7PM CST, public drive-thru testing will be at Lake Alice Park in Wewahitchka, 111 Lake Alice Park Drive. Individuals must be 18 years or older to be tested. To enter testing site, please follow the signs and please stay in vehicles. Symptoms are NOT required for testing, and appointments are not necessary. For more information, call 850-227-1276.

Florida Department of Health

in GULF COUNTY

2475 Garrison Avenue, Port St. Joe, Florida 32456

PHONE: 850/227-1276 • FAX 850/227-7587

www.FloridaHealth.gov

TWITTER: HealthyFLA

FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth

YOUTUBE: fldoh

FLICKR: HealthyFla

PINTEREST: HealthyFla

TESTING

Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your physician will evaluate you for other possible causes of respiratory illness and also contact the county health department to coordinate COVID-19 testing.

ANTIBODY TESTING

For questions about antibody testing, contact the Florida Department of Health: Gulf (850) 227-1276.

CDC information about antibody testing can be found using this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>

For a helpful guide, please see: http://ww11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/action/antibody_testing.pdf

MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 have you feeling STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741
- Florida Blue launched a 24-hour, free emotional support helpline for all Floridians. Any Floridian – even if uninsured or insured by another plan – can call [833-848-1762](tel:833-848-1762) for support in managing feelings of stress, anxiety, grief or fear related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Counselors cannot provide information on COVID-19 testing or treatment.
- Big Bend Community Based Care oversees a wide network of community partners in the fields of mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment and child protective services throughout an 18-county area in Northwest Florida, from Escambia to Madison counties. Florida residents can call the agency's hotline at 1-888-95-GetHelp or 1-888-954-3843 at any time, day or night, and staff a member will help connect them to a provider in their community, regardless of whether they have health insurance. For more information about Big Bend Community Based Care, visit BigBendCBCGetHelp.org.

CLOTH FACE COVERS/MASK

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. It is important to note that these face coverings:

1. Are not surgical or N-95 respirators, which continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and medical first responders, and
2. The use of cloth face coverings does not mean we can remove previously set social distancing measures.

For information on how you can make a facemask at home, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html> and watch this video <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several resources available for rural residents and business coping with the impact of COVID-19. Please visit the Rural Development Coronavirus Response page: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus>

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

We encourage any Floridian whose employment has been negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 to visit FloridaJobs.org and click on Reemployment Assistance Service Center to learn more about the program and watch a short video on how to apply. Click [here](#) for a direct link to instructions on how to apply for Reemployment Assistance. Select the hyperlink to download and view the [Reemployment Assistance Resource Guide](#).

If you can't apply by email you can pick up a paper application and submit it by mail. Below is the following pick up locations for paper applications in Gulf County. For more information call 850-229-1641.

- Port St. Joe – CareerSource, 401 Peters St.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES-BAY/ GULF/ FRANKLIN COUNTIES:

Financial Emergency/Hardship: 850-763-0475

1. Call First Monday of each month after 9am for screenings
2. An initial screening will take place on the phone to complete the application process and receive an appointment. a. Proof of need will be required: past due utility bill, proof of check stub from place of employment (before and after date affected).

FOOD PANTRY LOCATIONS

- 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the Month-WIG Community Center, 401 Peters St., Port St. Joe
- Farm Share distribution will be the 1st and 3rd Monday of month at 4:00pm. Drive-thru pick up on a first come, first serve.
- Second Harvest of the Big Bend: 2nd Saturday of each month, Honeyville Community Center, 240 Honeyville Park Road. (3 family per vehicle limit – all families do not have to be present to receive food. Please, no children. Prepare for long wait times. Please ensure trunk/bed of vehicle has space available. Do not get out of your vehicle. Lower tailgates/lift trunks prior to turning in.

TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been reported in all states, and some areas are experiencing community spread of the disease. Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19.

CDC recommends you [stay home](#) as much as possible, especially if your trip is not essential, and [practice social distancing](#) especially if you are at [higher risk of severe illness](#). **Don't travel if you are sick** or travel with someone who is sick. Residents from Connecticut, New Jersey and New York are still advised to isolate or quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time of entry into Florida or the duration of the individual's presence in Florida, whichever is shorter.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

GULF COUNTY PLAN FOR REOPENING SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS

The Governor, Ron DeSantis, has lifted the Vacation Rental Ban in Gulf County. The BOCC submitted a plan to safely reopen rentals, which was APPROVED on May 19th. We are so thankful to the Governor and our BOCC for their swift action! In order to reopen safely and help you during this new travel environment, we have put together some tools to help plan your next adventure in Gulf County. We are excited to welcome you back! Let's not Jump In, Let's Wade in!

See county requirements at <https://www.visitgulf.com/getyourfeetwet/> and click on "Stay In the Know".

We ask that you join in to help familiarize yourself with the guidelines for [Gulf County Vacation Rentals](#) along with the State of Florida and the CDC.

For a list of states with case rates higher than 500/100k, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html>. Click on "Rates" above the map to view the most updated information.

STATE ISSUED ORDERS:

To see ALL of Gov. DeSantis Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, visit: <https://www.flgov.com/covid-19/>

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

On, Friday, May 22, 2020, Gov. DeSantis lifted the restrictions on youth sports and summer camps. This new order will go into effect immediately. Guidance for Organized Youth Activities:

<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FL-Summer-Camp-Guidance-FAQs-5-21-20.pdf>

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

On April 16, Governor DeSantis issued [EO 20-104](#) which suspends the requirement that Floridians must recertify reemployment assistance status every two weeks.

FORECLOSURES & EVICTION RELIEF

On May 14, the Governor also issued [Executive Order 20-121](#), extending EO 20-94, providing targeted, temporary relief from certain mortgage foreclosures and evictions until June 2, 2020.

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On April 2, Governor Ron DeSantis issued [Executive Order 20-93](#), directing the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and other executive agencies to take necessary actions to improve DEO's Reemployment Assistance Program.

RESTAURANTS

[Per EO 20-123](#), restaurants and food establishments may serve patrons at indoor seating so long as they limit indoor occupancy up to 50% of their seating capacity, excluding employees. Social distancing requirements are still in place. Bar counters are to remain closed to seating and outdoor seating remains available with social distancing.

Gulf County Chamber of Commerce resource list: <http://business.gulfchamber.org/list/>

[Check out the Digital Directory: Restaurants in Gulf County and Mexico Beach, FL](#)

LOCAL UPDATES:

GULF COUNTY- As of 5/12/2020, all of Gulf County is under a BURN BAN. All outdoor burning of yard trash, household paper products, bonfires, campfires, outdoor fireplaces and cooking fires are prohibited unless: 1) authorized by the Florida Forest Service; 2) for cooking of food exclusively within a contained gas or charcoal grill. The setting of fires to any grass, brush or forest covered land, unless authorized by the Florida Forest Service, shall constitute a violation of the law.

CITY OF MEXICO BEACH-The Mexico Beach BOCC has opened the beach for all activities with no restrictions. However, strict social distancing guidelines should be followed. All other national, state and local travel restrictions and guidelines apply.

SCHOOLS

Governor DeSantis announced on Saturday, April 18, that all K-12 schools will continue distance learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year. For the full release: <http://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/florida-extends-distance-learning-through-remainder-of-academic-year.stml>

PIGGLY WIGGLY PSJ is open daily from 6am to 10pm and is now offering ONLINE shopping. Visit www.DurensPigglyWiggly.com for more information. We ask all customers to remain 6 feet apart. The deli is no longer self-serve but is open. Please try to shop one person per buggy.

PHARMACY UPDATES

Effective immediately, all BUY RITE DRUG Pharmacies will be operating via drive-through only.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Sheriff's Office is no longer allowing visitors in the lobby. Office staff will remain at work and will be accessible by telephone and email.

LIBRARIES

Both Gulf County libraries are closed until further notice. Please call or visit NWRLS.com to place holds on library items which are available for curbside pick-up on Tuesdays 10-4 in Port St. Joe and Thursdays 10-4 in Wewahitchka.

ASCENSION SACRED HEART

Online urgent care is available through Ascension Online Care at a discounted \$20 with the code HOME. You can have a video visit with a doctor without leaving your home. Visit <http://ascension.org/onlinecare> to start your visit.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

In order to promote social distancing and discourage gatherings of 10 or more people, the health department is asking all clients to call the front desk at (850) 227-1276, before entering the lobby. We're here for you! Give us a call to discuss curbside pickup for birth control, medications, or emergency contraception.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has upended children's daily lives, resulting in added stress and uncertainty. Studies show that adversity during childhood, including adversity stemming from natural disasters, can have lasting impacts on children's social emotional health. Fortunately, families can take steps to support and protect children's emotional well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information visit the Nat'l Institute for Children's Health Quality site at [Article: Supporting Children's Health During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Here are some clear, concrete tips for physically distancing while staying emotionally and socially connected <https://preventchildabuse.org/coronavirus-resources/>

The Germ that Wears a Crown: A Story About the Coronavirus: This is a story, coloring & activity book from FSU Center for Child Stress & Health to help children cope with COVID-19. The book teaches children about the virus, social distancing and how to express and manage strong emotions. Visit <http://fsustress.org/ebook.html> to download a free copy!

CLEANING AND DISINFECTANT SAFETY

The daily number of calls to poison centers increased sharply at the beginning of March 2020 for exposures to both cleaners and disinfectants. To reduce improper use and prevent unnecessary chemical exposures, users should always read and follow directions on the label, don't mix chemicals, wear protective gear, use in a well-ventilated area and store chemicals out of the reach of children. For more information you can contact the Poison Control hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6916e1.htm?s_cid=mm6916e1_w

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECENTLY TRAVELED TO AN AREA WITH AN OUTBREAK OF COVID-19?

If you are returning from an area with an outbreak of COVID-19, the CDC is recommending you self-isolate for 14 days immediately upon returning from your travels, even if asymptomatic (no symptoms). Follow the CDC steps to help protect other people in your home and community: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath during those 14 days, contact your health care professional and mention your recent travel. Your provider will work with the health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If you have had close contact with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from an impacted area, you should call a health care professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECOVER FROM COVID-19?

Most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Individuals will be asked to remain at home, except to get medical care. Stay in touch with your doctor if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency. People with COVID-19 who have stayed home can stop home isolation after meeting ALL of the following conditions:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved)
- At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

A test-based strategy is preferred for discontinuation of transmission-based precautions for patients who are hospitalized or severely immunocompromised or being transferred to a long-term care or assisted living facility.

STAY INFORMED:

To get the latest information, visit [FloridaHealth.gov](https://www.floridahealth.gov) and follow on Social Media:

Florida Department of Health: [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) -or- [Facebook Florida Department of Health \(DOH\)](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaDepartmentofHealth)

Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: [Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners](https://www.facebook.com/GulfFranklinCountyCommunityHealthImprovementPartners)